

*The Constitution of the
Kingdom* 363

The history of the *oppida* in this period is one of growing freedom, a shaking-off of many of the burdens imposed upon them by the Norman conquerors, or laid upon them, in defiance of the original contract, by the bishops, abbots, or barons of the locality. Thus in the early years of Roger II., Ambrose, abbot of the monastery of Lipari, had attracted many Italian colonists to the island by the grant of a *comuetudo*. In 1133 the peasants complain to the King that their lord, now made into a bishop, is increasing the original obligations, and they are granted a fresh charter from the Crown.

We have seen how the Assises protect the *homines* against the great lords and regulate the burdens which might be imposed both on the under-tenant and on the "men" of the estate. But in addition to the Crown, the lords themselves are found yielding to the demands of the tenants, and issuing new or revised charters highly advantageous to the *homines*. A striking instance is found in the privileges granted by Roffred, abbot of Monte Cassino, to the men of Pontecorvo, and Sant¹ Angelo in Theodice, fiefs of the great monastery, * The terms show in a very clear

light the
distinction of lands according as they
are with
and without service, the number and
nature of
the exactions which had been foisted
on them, the
survival of Lombard customs such as
that of the
mundwald, the universal demand for
native and

« Tout! », *StoriaM*, » . *Monte Cassino*, ii., pp.
198-203,